

September 2020 eNews

Mester's Message



So how do we serve our community during these challenging times? This month we continue this dialog with the VLMGA “L= delivering strong community-based and collaborative **Leadership**” as informed by the ICMA Code of Ethics (adopted 1924, updated 2020), specifically two tenets:

Tenet 7. Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation

in the election of the members of the employing legislative body. *

Tenet 8. Make it a duty continually to improve the member’s professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques. *

*review associated Guidelines at: <https://icma.org/icma-code-ethics>

As we explore these tenets, have you recently considered the Declaration of Ideals (adopted in the early 1980s, *Public Management* article, August 2020, <https://icma.org/declaration-ideals>) designed to enhance public trust and confidence in local government, to achieve equity and social justice, to affirm human dignity, and to improve the quality of life for the individual and the community? Still relevant to today’s society, culture and community challenges. Of the eleven ideals three resonated with me as aligned with the above tenets:

Ideal 2. Recognize the right of citizens to influence decisions that affect their well-being; advocate a forum for meaningful citizen participation and expression of the political process; and facilitate the clarification of community values and goals.

Ideal 9. Seek a balanced life through ongoing professional, intellectual, and emotional growth.

Ideal 10. Demonstrate commitment to professional ethics and ideals and support colleagues in the maintenance of these standards.

So how do these tenets and ideals translate into the intersection of our professional and personal roles? As a few examples, have you committed and followed through on actions such as:

- Adopted an election and campaigning personnel policy and discussed it with employees to clarify their individual rights versus acceptable workplace actions? Contemplated how you balance advocating for issues of personal interest with your professional obligations?
- Partnered with your General Registrar to accommodate increased no-excuse mail-in and in-person absentee voting in a pandemic but healthy social distant environment?
- Initiated community conversations on police reform, cultural antiracism change, or altering state and local holidays for inclusiveness?
- Encourage and celebrate staff’s out of the box thinking for mental health, recreational and library programming that engages the community safely....outdoors, virtually or hybrid models?
- Continued the professional development commitment to your own and organization staff through virtual tools but also creative, interactive and two-way dialog?
- What new or virtual tools have you implemented to remain engaged with your leadership team and communicating with your full employee base?

Can we achieve “yes” to all the above questions and so many more? Of course! VLMGA members are doing just that and with intentionality on the “**A= Action** to deliver collaborate leadership for a strong internal and external community built on equity and social justice, affirms human dignity and improves the quality of life for all.

Recently I read a quote attributed to Ruth Bader Ginsburg (1993 US Supreme Court Justice confirmation hearings) that is as relevant today for our leadership roles as it was in then:

“The richness of diversity of this country is a treasure, and it is a constant

challenge, too, a challenge to remain tolerant and respectful of one another.”
This is a shared responsibility for us all.

There are many options available to achieve the ideals and execute on these tenets and ideals. Check out additional eNews articles as well as these ICMA resources:

- ICMA’s Coaching Webinars: <https://icma.org/icma-coaching-program-webinars> (live or archived webinars to share with staff groups via various virtual platforms such as MS Teams, WebEx, Zoom, GoTo Meeting, etc)
- ICMA’s Leading Ideas videos: <https://icma.org/leadingideas> (stream from a site like YouTube or Vimeo via a virtual platform)
- ICMA Ethics Staff are available for members to confidentially discuss any questions about our ethical obligations.
- Community Conversations eNews articles- check out this edition’s inaugural one by Mercury Payton, Town of Vienna

Welcome to our newest VLGMA members Janelle Downes, Director of Human Resources, County of Fauquier; Minetaa Flythe, Administrative Coordinator, City of Portsmouth; Steve Mason, Human Resources Director, City of Falls Church; Natalie Spillman, Marketing & Engagement Strategist, County of Chesterfield ; Paul Stoddard, Planning Director, City of Falls Church and Mimi Terry, Chief Financial Officer, City of Portsmouth.

Stay safe, healthy and remain strong, Cindy

[Contact Cindy Mester](#)

Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA’s Strategic Plan



Focus on the Future – A Look at VLGMA’s Strategic Plan

By Craig Meadows, VLGMA President-Elect

With the unprecedented challenges we’ve faced in local government this year, it’s been difficult for us to think about the future, and what we need to do to get there. However, having a strategic plan is an integral part in guiding an organization’s future, and VLGMA is no different.

Over the next few months, I’d like to share with you goals and action steps from VLGMA’s Strategic Plan, and ask that you consider how you may contribute to achieving its success. Our Plan contains six strategic focus areas – Communications and Networking; Next Generation of the Profession; Civic Engagement; Membership Growth and Support; Professional Development; and Leadership and Ethics.

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Community Conversations



Community Conversations by Mercury Payton, Town Manager, Vienna

**In order to form – and celebrate – a more perfect union
Proposed Liberty Amendments Day celebrates an imperfect ‘more perfect’ union**

Nearly 250 years ago, the United States of America was formed with an intent to provide liberty and freedom “for all,” and the nation’s founding documents demonstrate that intent. The preamble to the United States Constitution begins with “We the people…” and seeks to insure “domestic tranquility” and promote “the general welfare” – the health, peace, and safety – of its citizens. The founders promise to secure the “Blessings of Liberty” not only for themselves but also their posterity.

To discuss this concept further or ask questions contact Mercury (Manager@viennava.gov)

Have a topic for a future Community Conversations article to suggest?, please contact Cindy Mester (cmester@fallschurchva.gov)

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A DAO in the Life



A DAO in the Life

Diane Rebertus, Director of Library Services, Gloucester County

Has COVID-19 changed the way you do business? Of course, it has. Employees are teleworking one, two days a week or more. County services are modified, lots provided online. Staff are worried about their health. Will this thing make us or break us? Seems like every day is a challenge. Our job as leaders is to meet public demand and to support our employees.

COVID has changed the way libraries provide services. Yes, we offer online products but what we're best known for are our "hands-on" interactions. Engaging with the public to inspire their lifelong learning adventures...story times, teen lock-ins, the annual summer reading extravaganza, adult craft and gardening classes, readers' advisory, reference service, the list goes on and on. Patrons, whose greatest love is the printed word, turned to digital selections in order to keep reading...for a while at least.

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Civic Engagement - Town of Smithfield



Civic Engagement During COVID-19

By Michael Stallings, Town Manager, Town of Smithfield

If nothing else, COVID-19 has forced us to rethink everything we do as local governments. We have been forced to revamp how we deliver services in an environment that does not allow us to have physical interactions with our citizens. How do we continue to respond to the needs of our citizens when our facilities are closed? How do we continue to provide services and at the same time protect our staff? How do we migrate to virtual meetings and still provide access to the public and provide for public input? These, and many more, questions have been front and center for all of us as Managers.

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VLGMA Membership Renewal Reminder



Remember to renew your VLGMA membership!

VLGMA membership renewal is currently underway. The membership year started July 1, and about one-third of the membership has renewed so far – please take a few minutes to renew your membership for FY2021: <https://vlgma.vml.org/vlgma-membership-information/>

If you haven't already renewed, consider the agency options available: standard agency (up to five individuals) and large agency (up to 10 individuals) memberships. This way, more of your colleagues can join as a group and save.

If you have questions about renewal, email Janet Areson at jareson@vml.org

Institute of Government Update



There have been several changes in the leadership of Virginia local governments in the past few weeks. Please be sure to reach out to the newly appointed CAOs and DAOs in your region and welcome them. While some faces may be familiar, there are some new ones as well. It always meant quite a bit to me to receive a welcoming note or phone call from a neighboring manager/administrator when I started a new local government position in my "previous" life.

[Contact Charles Hartgrove](#)

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ICMA Update



Registration is open for UNITE ICMA's Virtual 2020 Conference!

The conference will be September 23–26, 2020. There are lots of great sessions in a variety of formats and the conference is very affordable. Register today at:

<https://unite.icma.org/registration/>

Tedd's Take



Heart over Mind

One of the best parts of being semiretired is having the flexibility to see kids and grandkids on a more frequent basis. My wife and I have a total of nine grandchildren, ranging from two to 14 years old. Only one lives relatively close by, and the rest are scattered north and south, but, thankfully, all east of the Mississippi at present. We also are lucky to have a retreat at the mouth of the Rappahannock River near the Chesapeake Bay, which was bought with visits by kids and grandkids in mind.

[Contact Tedd Povar](#)

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Mel's Poetry Corner



Exploring our Four Rooms

The architecture of our being's home
has four different rooms in which to roam.
Every moment is an opportunity to
decorate our home with love and gratitude.

In the physical room, body dominates,
form expressing in our individual shape.
In the emotional room we innately feel
and experience what the heart reveals.

Through thinking, judging, analyzing, we mentally reside
in a room where we might primarily abide.
The spiritual, a less developed resting place.
Perhaps the smallest room in our inner space.

Every moment we choose
what is our present room.
As life evolves we might move
and spend more time in a different room.

Fullness and equanimity are realized
when balance harmonizes our lives.
For all these rooms we need visit
from the physical to spirit.

Our Founding Fathers room-in-ated upon this:
Governance for the pursuit of happiness.
Perhaps if we are divinely attuned,
happiness is no longer pursued.

[Contact Mel Gillies](#)



Position Changes And Other Events

August 2020

- James Worsley, Chesterfield County parks and recreation director since 2016, has been appointed deputy county administrator for human services. He previously served as the parks and recreation director of Columbus, GA, and as the regional parks and recreation director of Mecklenburg County, NC.
- Doug Stanley has resigned as the impending city manager of Lynchburg effective immediately. He previously served as the Warren County administrator since 2000.
- Eric Politt, Glasgow town manager since 2019, has been appointed town manager of Tappahannock effective in early October. He previously served as the chief financial officer of Shelbysville, KY, and as an ICMA Fellow in Templeton, MA.
- William Saunders has been appointed Windsor town manager. He most recently served as the director of

planning and community development of Surry County. He previously served Smithfield as director of planning, engineering, and public works.

- Doug Stanley was appointed city manager of Lynchburg effective September 1. He served Warren County for the last 27 years and was the county administrator since 2000. He previously served as the county's planning director and zoning administrator.

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